DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 374 868 JC 940 563

AUTHOR Ozaki, Roger H.
TITLE Freshman Orientation: A Comparison of Five-Week Versus Ten-Week Sessions.
PUB DATE [94]
NOTE 18p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Career Planning; *College Freshmen; Community Colleges; Comparative Analysis; *Participant Satisfaction; *Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; *School Orientation; *Student Personnel Services; Study Skills; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *Class Length

ABSTRACT

At DeKalb College in Clarkston, Georgia, freshman orientation classes are conducted by the counseling and student personnel staff who present information about career planning, study skills, student activities, college regulation, student seminars, drugs, program planning, and library seminars. Classes meet for 10 hours per quarter. During summer quarter, beginning freshmen were given the option of attending 5 hours of summer orientation sessions with the fall quarter orientation last 5, rather than the traditional 10 weeks. A study was conducted to determine whether the needs of students were satisfied by the orientation classes, and if there were differences between the evaluations of freshmen in the 5-week classes as compared to those in the 10-week classes. Approximately 1,300 freshmen evaluated the classes at the final class session. In general, student evaluations of the 5-week sections were more positive than evaluations of the 10-week sections. For example, 91.5% of the freshmen in the 5-week course felt that the program planning session was essential or very important for the beginning freshmen, while 71.5% of the freshmen in the 10-week classes felt the same. The career planning sessions were considered essential or very important by 70.8% of the 5-week sample and 56.4% of the 10-week sample. Drug information and study skills sessions appeared to be the least effective. (KP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 374 868

Freshman Orientation: A Comparison of Five-Week Versus Ten-Week Sessions

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. Ozaki

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Roger H. Ozaki

JC 940 563

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to compare the needs of freshmen who completed five week versus ten week orientation sessions during Fall Quarter. It was found that the freshmen felt that sessions about academic course planning, career planning, and academic advising were the most effective as compared to study skills and drug information sessions. Freshmen who were attending the five week orientation sessions were more positive in their evaluations than the freshmen who were attending the ten week orientation sessions. Vlisides and Eddy (1993) found that increasing numbers of older graduate students have an impact on the institutions that serve them and that traditional student services programs, such as orientation, no longer meet those needs.

Freshman Orientation: A Comparison of Five Week Versus Ten Week Sessions

Roger H. Ozaki, ED.D.
Director of Testing
DeKalb College
Clarkston, GA

The major purpose of orientation is to provide students with knowledge about college life and the various activities which would ease the adjustment to the college environment and thereby increase the students' chances for success. Without assistance many students will be listed in the attrition numbers that are a concern to all colleges. Levitz and Noel (1989) found that one third of the full-time freshmen have left their original college after a year. Hopefully, the orientation process contributes to the social, intellectual, and emotional growth of the student and continues to be an integral part of higher education. Effective orientation is extremely important in the commuter college because of the increasing heterogeneity of the student population - older students, part-time students, minorities and internationals students, and underprepared students - and the rapidly changing educational process. Kramer and Washburn (1983) found that students consistently ranked and perceived academic and career planning needs as the most important need during and after orientation. In order to determine if students needs are being met, the college must assume the role of critically evaluating the orientation process. Kramer and Washburn (1983) found that the overall perceived need level of students for orientation decreased significantly as they went through orientation sessions and became more confident. Levitz and Noel (1989) found that fostering student success in the freshman year is the most significant intervention an institution can make for student persistence.

At DeKalb College, the freshman orientation classes were conducted by the

counseling and student personnel staff who presented information about career planning, study skills, student activities, college regulation, student seminars, drugs, program planning, and library seminars. During the classes, the students were given many opportunities to interact with the student personnel staff who were responsible for teaching the topics. Since the freshman orientation class carried one hour of academic credit, the college required that the classes meet for ten hours per quarter.

An innovation in the orientation program was implemented during summer quarter when beginning freshmen were given the option of attending five hours of summer orientation sessions with the subsequent fall quarter orientation classes lasting only five weeks. Beginning freshmen who did not attend the summer sessions in orientation were required to enroll in the regular ten week classes.

PROCEDURE

During Fall Quarter, the orientation process was divided into 22 sections of the five week classes and 15 sections of the ten week classes. The total enrollment in the orientation classes was approximately 1300 freshmen. During the final class session, the freshmen were given the opportunity to evaluate the orientation classes, and each student was asked to rate each orientation session on a five point basis according to the following scale:

5 - Essential for the beginning freshman

4 - Very important for the majority of beginning freshmen

3 - Important (but not essential for all)

2 - Relatively unimportant (but should be continued)

1 - Unimportant (should not be continued)

From the student evaluations in the sections, a random sample was selected. The sample size varied between 314 and 320 for the five week classes and between 299 and 309 for the ten week classes. The number and percent of each evaluation response was tabulated for each orientation category to show the relevance of the sessions to the freshmen in the five week classes as well as the ten week classes. In addition, a composite evaluation of sections was tabulated.

Since there was a time variable between the five week and ten week sections of orientation, an analysis was conducted to determine if significant differences existed between the students' evaluations of the five week and ten week sections.

RESULTS

In general, the students' evaluations in the five week sections of orientation revealed a more positive attitude toward the classes than did the students' evaluations in the ten week sections. In Table 1, the students' ratings in the five week classes were depicted while Table 2 shows the ratings

in the ten week classes.

For example, 91.5% of the sample of the freshmen in the five week classes felt that the program planning session was essential and very important for the beginning freshmen while 71.5% of the sample of freshmen in the ten week classes felt the same. In the career planning sessions, 70.8% of the sample in the five week classes felt that it was essential a very important while 56.4 o the sample in the ten week classes felt the same.

Concerning the student personnel session, 55.4% of the sample in the five week classes felt that it was essential and very important while 51.3% of the sample in the ten week classes felt the same.

In the final program planning and evaluation session, 77.3% of the sample of freshmen in the five week classes felt that it was essential and very important while 53.5% of the sample in the ten week classes felt the same.

Table 3 shows the composite evaluations of the five and ten week sections. Combining the data provides a regression toward the mean in terms of numbers and percentages in each category. Although the composite evaluations do not appear as favorable as the evaluations found in Table 1 and 2, the is still a strongly positive trend toward the overall evaluation of the orientation process.

TABLE 1

STUDENTS' EVALUATION OF THE FIVE WEEK ORIENTATION CLASSES

SESSIONS	RATINGS*					TOTALS
	5	4	3	2	1	
Library Tour	96 30.0%	78 24.4%	94 29.4%	37 11.5%	15 4.7%	320 100%
Student Activities	67 21.1%	98 30.9%	103 32.5%	41 12.9%	8 2.5%	317 99.9%
Study Skills (Interpretation)	68 21.1%	102 32.1%	86 27.1%	34 10.7%	28 9.0%	318 100%
Program Planning	223 69.5%	71 22.0	18 5.6%	7 2.2%	2 .7%	321 100%
Study Skills (College)	73 22.9%	103 32.3%	95 29.8%	30 9.4%	18 5.6%	319 100%
Career Planning	99 31.0%	127 39.8%	72 22.6%	13 4.1%	8 2.5%	319 100%
Student Personnel Services	70 22.1%	106 33.3%	101 31.7%	30 9.4%	11 3.5%	318 100%
Drug Information	62 19.5%	78 24.5%	100 31.4%	52 16.4%	26 8.2%	318 100%
Program Planning and Evaluation	144 45.9%	99 31.5	48 15.3%	18 5.7%	5 1.6%	314 100%

* 5 - Essential for the beginning freshman
4 - Very important
3 - Important
2 - Relatively unimportant
1 - Unimportant

TABLE 2

STUDENTS' EVALUATION OF THE TEN WEEK ORIENTATION CLASSES

SESSIONS	RATINGS*					TOTALS
	5	4	3	2	1	
Library Tour	100 32.8%	73 23.9%	65 21.3%	42 13.8%	25 8.2%	305 100%
Student Activities	65 21.4%	76 25.0%	100 32.9%	42 13.8%	21 6.9%	304 100%
Study Skills (Interpretation)	72 24.0%	81 27.0%	82 27.3%	36 12.0%	29 9.7%	300 100%
Program Planning	142 45.9%	79 25.6	61 19.7%	20 6.5%	7 2.3%	309 100%
Study Skills (College)	75 24.8%	83 27.5%	94 31.1%	27 8.9%	23 7.6%	302 99.9%
Career Planning	77 25.4%	94 31.0%	78 25.7%	32 10.6%	22 7.3%	303 100%
Student Personnel Services	75 25.0%	79 26.3%	83 27.7%	38 12.7%	25 8.3%	300 100%
Drug Information	55 18.2%	60 19.9%	89 29.5%	52 17.2%	46 15.2%	302 100%
Program Planning and Evaluation	82 27.4%	78 26.1	81 27.1%	34 11.4	24 8.0%	299 100%

* 5 - Essential for the beginning freshman
4 - Very important
3 - Important
2 - Relatively unimportant
1 - Unimportant

TABLE 3

A COMPOSITE OF THE STUDENTS' EVALUATION OF THE ORIENTATION CLASSES

SESSIONS	RATINGS*					TOTALS
	5	4	3	2	1	
Library Tour	196 31.4%	151 24.2%	159 25.4%	79 12.6%	40 6.4%	625 100%
Student Activities	132 21.3%	174 28.0%	203 32.6%	83 13.4%	29 4.7%	621 100%
Study Skills (Interpretation)	140 22.7%	183 29.6%	168 27.2%	70 11.3%	57 9.2%	618 100%
Program Planning	365 57.9%	150 23.8%	79 12.5%	27 4.3%	9 1.4%	630 99.9%
Study Skills (College)	148 23.8%	186 30.0%	189 30.4%	57 9.2%	41 6.6%	621 100%
Career Planning	176 28.3%	221 35.5%	150 24.1%	45 7.2%	30 4.8%	622 99.9%
Student Personnel Services	145 23.5%	185 29.9%	184 29.8%	68 11.0%	36 5.8%	618 100%
Drug Information	117 18.9%	138 22.3%	189 30.5%	104 16.7%	72 11.6%	620 100%
Program Planning and Evaluation	226 36.9%	177 28.9	129 21.0%	52 8.5%	29 4.7%	613 100%

* 5 - Essential for the beginning freshman
4 - Very important
3 - Important
2 - Relatively unimportant
1 - Unimportant

In order to determine if significant differences existed between the five and ten week sections, a nonparametric statistic (chi square) was used. It was found that the student evaluations in the five and ten week classes were significantly different for the following sections: program planning, career planning, student personnel services, and final program planning and evaluation.

Table 4 shows the comparison between the student evaluations of the five week and ten week sections concerning the program planning session. The evaluations of the freshmen in the five week sections were significantly higher than the evaluations of the freshmen in the ten week sections.

In Table 5, it can be seen that the student evaluations in the five week sections concerning the career planning session were significantly higher than the student evaluations in the ten week sections.

The comparison of the evaluations concerning the student personnel services session is depicted in Table 6. Again, the five week sections viewed the session more positively than the ten week sections.

Table 7 shows the program planning and evaluation session was considered valuable by many freshmen in both sections, but the five week sections exhibited significantly higher evaluations than the ten week sections did.

The differences in the evaluations were nonsignificant for the following areas: library services, student activities, study skills test, study skills interpretation and drug information.

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF FRESHMEN EVALUATIONS CONCERNING
THE PROGRAM PLANNING ORIENTATION CLASS

RATINGS	SECTIONS	
	5 WEEK	10 WEEK
5 - Essential	223	142
4 - Very important	71	79
3 - Important	18	61
2 - Relatively unimportant	7	20
1 - Unimportant	2	7
TOTAL	321	309

$x^2 = 50.60$; ** $p < .01$

significant at .01 level

TABLE 5

DISTRIBUTION OF FRESHMEN EVALUATIONS CONCERNING
THE CAREER PLANNING ORIENTATION CLASS

RATINGS	SECTIONS	
	5 WEEK	10 WEEK
5 - Essential	99	77
4 - Very important	127	94
3 - Important	72	78
2 - Relatively unimportant	13	32
1 - Unimportant	8	22
TOTAL	319	303

$x^2 = 21.76$; * $p < .05$

significant at .05 level

TABLE 6

DISTRIBUTION OF FRESHMEN EVALUATIONS CONCERNING
THE STUDENT PERSONNEL SERVICES ORIENTATION CLASS

RATINGS	SECTIONS	
	5 WEEK	10 WEEK
5 - Essential	70	75
4 - Very important	106	79
3 - Important	101	83
2 - Relatively unimportant	30	38
1 - Unimportant	11	25
TOTAL	318	300

$x^2 = 11.72$; * $p < .05$

significant at .05 level

TABLE 7

DISTRIBUTION OF FRESHMEN EVALUATIONS CONCERNING
THE FINAL PROGRAM PLANNING SESSION EVALUATION

RATINGS	SECTIONS	
	5 WEEK	10 WEEK
5 - Essential	144	82
4 - Very important	99	78
3 - Important	48	81
2 - Relatively unimportant	18	34
1 - Unimportant	5	24
TOTAL	314	299

$x^2 = 44.953$; ** $p < .01$

significant at .01 level

SUMMARY

The main purposes of the study were to determine if the needs of students were satisfied in the orientation classes an to determine if differences existed between the evaluations of freshmen in the five week classes as compared to the freshmen in the ten week classes.

At the end of Fall Quarter the freshmen at DeKalb College were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the orientation classes which were conducted by the counseling and student personnel staff. The orientation classes were divided into five week and ten week sections because some of the freshmen attended summer orientation sessions and were not required to enroll in the regular ten week classes.

A random sample of the student's evaluations was selected from both the five and ten week sections, and it was found that the freshmen in the five week sections were more positive in the evaluation than the freshmen in the ten week sections were. Several variables such as the length of the sections (five week versus ten week) and type of student (motivated versus lesser motivated) might have affected the level of evaluation.

Significant differences between the freshmen evaluations of the five week and ten week sections occurred for the following orientation sessions: program planning, career planning, student personnel services, and final program planning and evaluation. Nonsignificant differences between the sections were found in the sessions relating to library services, student activities, study skills test, study skills interpretation, and drug information.

CONCLUSION

It was evident from the overall evaluations that the program planning, career planning, and final program planning and evaluation sessions were most

effective in meeting the needs of freshmen while the drug information and study skills sessions appeared to be the least effective. The remaining sessions of orientation - library services, student personnel services, and student activities - met the needs of students and were not subjected to extremely high or low evaluations.

Freshmen Orientation at DeKalb College has been an extremely relevant an important experience in which freshmen have opportunities to learn about the college environment. The periodic evaluations by students and administrators serve the purpose of determining whether student needs are being met in freshmen orientation. It is vital to the function of colleges to adapt freshmen orientation for the students of the future because of their cultural and economic diversity. Gordon and Grites (1984) concluded that faculty and administration need to be made more aware of educational, personal, and economic benefits of freshmen orientation.

REFERENCES

Gordon, V. and Grites, T. (1984). The Freshman Seminar Course: Helping Students Succeed. Journal of College Student Personnel, 25, 4, 315-320.

Kramer, G. and Washburn, R. (1983). The perceived Orientation Needs of New Students. Journal of College Student Personnel, 24, 4, 311-319.

Levitz, R. and Noel, L. (1989). Connecting Students to Institutions: Keys to Retention and Success. In the Freshman Year Experience. (J. Gardner & M. Upcraft, Eds.) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Noel, L. and Levitz, R. (1983). National Dropout Study. Iowa City, Iowa. American College Testing Program.

Perigo, D. and Upcraft, M. (1989). Orientation Programs. In the Freshman Year Experience. (J. Gardner & M. Upcraft, Eds.) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Vlisides, D. and Eddy, J. (1993). Graduate Student Orientation Models. College Student Journal, 27, 1, 96-98.